2:Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2



437 431 5. They set no fixed value on their various properties, and rarely make or procure anything with the express object of disposing of it in barter. Apparently they prefer to regard their transactions as presentations, for their mode of negociating is to *give* such objects as are desired by another in the hope of receiving in return something for which they have expressed a wish, it being tacitly understood that, unless otherwise mentioned beforehand, no "present" is to be accepted without an equivalent being rendered.

[578] 6. The natural consequence of this system is that most of the quarrels which so frequently occur among them originate in failure on the part of the recipient in making such a return as had been confidently expected.[1]

7. All iron-pointed weapons, tools, or shell ornaments are eagerly accepted by the *ē'rem-tâ'ga-* in exchange for such things as are more easily procured by them than by the *àryó'to-*:[2] for instance, an adze would generally be considered worth two ordinary bows, or a bundle of wooden-pointed arrows; or a man might undertake to make a canoe or bucket for one who would give him an adze.

428 422 8. But little care is taken of the utensils, weapons, canoes, &c., in daily use, and consequently new ones are often required, the old, when no longer serviceable, being thrown aside; as all their possessions consist of goods which need to be more or less frequently replaced, it is hardly necessary to explain that there is no accumulation of the labours of former generations; hence also it arises that they are not tied by any laws of inheritance; more as a matter of sentiment than for any other reason, the nearest of kin takes possession of all the effects left by a deceased person, and as often as not they are distributed ere long among such friends as may be in need of any of the articles in question.

422 9. The weapons, tools, and other property pertaining to one member of a family are regarded as available for the use of his or her relatives, but such articles as a cooking-pot, canoe, or sounding-board, when not required by the owner, are looked upon somewhat in the light of public property by members of the same community; in short, the rights of private property are only so far recognised that no one would without permission appropriate or remove to a distance anything belonging to a friend or neighbour.

000 **Agriculture.**—1. Before the arrival of strangers in their midst,

[1] *Vide post* "Games and Amusements," paragraph 37.

[2] Further mention of this will be made at "Games and Amusements," paragraph 24. As will there be explained, the occasions on which they usually barter are when they meet for a *jeg-* at some permanent encampment.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2



piece of wood, has definite uses, and none of the nomadic forest peoples anywhere in the world are without it. Everywhere it is found it is effective in filling huge baskets with food – baskets equally simply and equally quickly made. I have already described (see p. 93) the baskets made by the Onges for purely temporary use on their hunting expeditions. In the communal huts, however, the making of real baskets involves hours of careful plaiting, working the supple fibres from the strong bark of selected rushes, and expert finishing. These baskets are an invariable and prized part of every family's inheritance and are preserved for as long as possible. Nowhere in the collection of basketry from Great Andaman are there baskets with more craftsmanship than the permanent ones of the Onges.[1] All the baskets are the shape of half an egg. There is little variation in size, all being about forty centimetres in diameter at the top, and about forty-five centimetres deep, unlike the temporary carriers, which vary considerably in size, according to whether they are to be carried by men, women, or even children, and what is to be carried.

At the opposite extreme from the underground harvest of roots, men and women alike use long thin hooked poles to hook down fruit from the trees, climbing up into the trees when necessary to strip the highest branches and then hiding the poles in the forest until they are next required (no attempt is ever made to carry them about). When the tree is not too large, it is ruthlessly chopped down and stripped as it lies on the ground. I was horrified in the first fortnight of April to see this happen to trees which the Onges call *danghecciò*, which bear blackish-red fruit about the size of a pigeon's egg. The attraction is the flavour of the pulp, but there is little of it, surrounding a large nut. To get at the pulp a thick, hard case has to be cracked, but to the formidable Onge teeth this is no problem and the case cracks comparatively easily. The nut itself is not edible; the honey-coloured pulp is sweetish, but there is so little that it takes ten fruits to provide ten grams of it. The fruits hang in bunches at the end of branches covered with leaves rather like a chestnut. As the wood is very soft, the Onges usually hack the trees down; large ones may merely have their branches lopped

[1] Editor's note: The author indicated in manuscript at this point his intention of giving a full description of the way in which these are made, but unfortunately died before he was able to do so.